

BEFORE THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

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APPLICATION OF WISCONSIN PUBLIC SERVICE ) Docket No.  
CORPORATION FOR AUTHORITY TO ADJUST )  
ELECTRIC AND NATURAL GAS RATES ) 6690-UR-127  
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EXAMINER MICHAEL NEWMARK, PRESIDING

Tr. 256-305

PUBLIC HEARING SESSIONS

2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

**CERTIFIED  
ORIGINAL**

Reported By:

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HEARING HELD:

November 1, 2022

NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM  
210 MUSEUM PLACE  
GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

COMMISSIONER TYLER HUEBNER PRESENT

1           TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

2           EXAMINER NEWMARK: I think we can begin  
3 by calling our first witness. We have two  
4 witnesses signed up so far. So if anyone else  
5 feels they want to make a comment, now's the time  
6 to get an appearance slip.

7           So first we have Senator Robert  
8 Cowles. So I'll call you up. So let me swear  
9 you in. Raise your right hand.

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1 ROBERT COWLES, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MR. COWLES: Good afternoon, and thank  
4 you for allowing me to speak today.

5 My name is State Senator Robert  
6 Cowles, a local state senator, and I represent  
7 Wisconsin's Second Senate District, which  
8 stretches from Wittenberg to Green Bay and down  
9 to Kaukauna, with this area including both WPS  
10 and We Energies Service territory.

11 I appreciate the PSC's willingness  
12 to hold a hearing in Northeast Wisconsin and want  
13 to thank the Citizens Utilities Board, who's I  
14 believe here today, also for requesting this  
15 in-person hearing in Green Bay and I believe also  
16 Milwaukee.

17 I'll be providing written comments  
18 shortly which go into more depth on what I'm  
19 going to say today on some of the more particular  
20 items on whether the PSC has adequately  
21 considered a number of factors prior to marching  
22 towards approval which is coming in the months  
23 ahead, but given the gravity of this increase,  
24 especially on residential folks, I wanted to  
25 provide some brief remarks in person today as

1 well.

2           With inflation taking no mercy on  
3 all of us, businesses, people, individuals,  
4 throughout my district, throughout the state, the  
5 idea that now is the time for a massive utility  
6 and gas rate increase is incredibly naive to the  
7 reality throughout WPS's service territory.

8           I certainly get that inflation of  
9 fuel costs and supply chain shortages of critical  
10 goods are causing financial burdens on the  
11 utility, and those are pass-through, as you know,  
12 but I don't -- and I don't want to downplay that  
13 reality. So we're not saying zero increase here.

14           Eventually, though, inflation, we  
15 hope and we believe, will subside, and supply  
16 chain shortages will alleviate. But this rate  
17 proposal could mean that WPS customers are left  
18 paying the bills and healthy profits to the  
19 utility beyond its necessity, and we have no  
20 guarantee that regulators will address those  
21 issues if they arise. So listen up, regulator  
22 over in the corner there, because people are  
23 hurting.

24           Further, as I'll detail in my  
25 written comments, I hope the Commission will

1 better do their due diligence on whether costs  
2 being incurred are all truly necessary and if  
3 expenditures are being put to their best use.

4 For example, WPS has long  
5 contested that they've been working on  
6 reliability projects to improve service to  
7 their customers, and that rate increase is  
8 necessary to build on these reliability efforts.

9 But if they've been working on  
10 reliability previously, why was 2021 one of the  
11 worst years since records started being kept  
12 when it comes to reliability? The average  
13 customer experienced about 1.4 outages with the  
14 average lasting more than six and a half hours  
15 last year.

16 Additionally, they assert that the  
17 return on equity they enjoy is necessary to gain  
18 and retain investors. Yet, WEC Energy Group, the  
19 parent company of WPS, reported this morning a  
20 net income of more than 300 million just in  
21 Quarter 3 of this year, an increase of more than  
22 10 million from the third quarter from the  
23 previous year.

24 Anybody that's followed my career  
25 knows that I'm a fan of free enterprise, and

1 success for Wisconsin-based businesses is  
2 imperative obviously. But WEC Energy Group's  
3 returns are not a result of market forces and  
4 consumer choice so much as they are the result of  
5 the stiff arm of government protecting their  
6 assets and stifling any opportunity for  
7 competition.

8           Those profits come from our  
9 pockets. And it's your decision -- and I'm  
10 speaking to the Commissioners now -- whether to  
11 continue allowing them to rake in cash in this  
12 very low-risk, very high-reward government-backed  
13 monopoly while friends, family and neighbors of  
14 ours are having to make tough choices at the  
15 grocery store. And as a legislator, as someone  
16 that's a conduit for their concerns, and I'm sure  
17 many of my colleagues feel the same way, and they  
18 should be here too, we hear about it regularly,  
19 the pain people are going through.

20           As mentioned, I have further  
21 concerns which are listed in my written testimony  
22 which may be submitted this afternoon. But  
23 ultimately, my primary concern is there's not  
24 enough due consideration of the comments and  
25 concerns of WPS ratepayers and the more than

1 1100 documents in the record of this proceeding  
2 to date.

3 I would like to request that the  
4 PSC either rejects this request from the utility  
5 and restarts the process in a more considered  
6 manner at a later date or that the PSC requires  
7 that WPS sends a new bill insert notice to  
8 ratepayers of their amended rate increase  
9 proposal and that accompanying public comment  
10 opportunities restart, including a new public  
11 hearing at a later date after customers have  
12 received a new notice that their bills could more  
13 than double from the initial proposal from recent  
14 months and that WPS alerted them to as initially  
15 required.

16 If WPS can truly provide us with  
17 better reliability and dependable energy sources  
18 which aren't subject to the woes of fuel cost  
19 adjustments, that could be better for Wisconsin  
20 in the long-term.

21 But a massive -- I believe a  
22 massive unaccountable rate increase will not get  
23 us there in the short-term; and that's what my  
24 constituents, the people of this state, are  
25 concerned about, the short-term.

1           Please heed my comments and the  
2   comments of others today, this afternoon and  
3   those tonight and others in Milwaukee later in  
4   the week and those that will be submitted online,  
5   by going back to the drawing board, starting this  
6   process again and reducing this proposal  
7   dramatically.

8           Thank you very much.

9           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thank you very much,  
10   Senator.

11           Okay. Calling up the next  
12   witness, Kathy Hartman. Let me swear you in.  
13   Raise your right hand.

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1 KATHY HARTMAN, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. HARTMAN: My name is Kathy Hartman,  
4 and I thank you for the opportunity to speak  
5 today. I acknowledge that we are in difficult  
6 times, but I think it's important to point out  
7 that nonprofits rely on the support of the  
8 business community.

9 I've served on several nonprofit  
10 boards in this area for many years, and I see  
11 firsthand the extent of WPS's generosity in our  
12 area. If you look around, you'll see many  
13 examples of WPS contributing to key projects and  
14 activities here and in other parts of Northeast  
15 Wisconsin.

16 So I'm looking at the long-term,  
17 and my perspective is that a financially  
18 successful company equals successful nonprofits  
19 equals a successful and thriving community.  
20 Thank you.

21 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thank you very much.

22 So the last appearance slip I  
23 have for a person to call -- get your slips in if  
24 you haven't done it yet -- so it's Representative  
25 Kristina Shelton. Let me swear you in.

1 KRISTINA SHELTON, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. SHELTON: Hello, all. Thank you  
4 for holding today's public meeting.

5 My name is Kristina Shelton, and  
6 since 2020, I have had the honor of representing  
7 the people of the city of Green Bay in  
8 Wisconsin's 90th Assembly District in the state  
9 legislature.

10 In this public office, my staff  
11 and I have had the unique opportunity of hearing  
12 from, assisting and supporting constituents of  
13 Green Bay with any issues brought to our  
14 attention.

15 Frequently, these issues focus on  
16 the cost of living and how working families can  
17 make ends meet in our ever-changing,  
18 ever-challenging economy. One of these primary  
19 stressors is being the increase in the cost of  
20 utilities just to keep the lights on and to keep  
21 the heat on and to keep their families safe and  
22 secure.

23 What we have in front of us today  
24 is a choice to give a hand up to the working  
25 class and to make sure that working people and

1 their families can get through the winter, put  
2 food on the table, to keep a roof over their  
3 head, and to keep the lights and the heat on, and  
4 to mediate your profit margins or you can max out  
5 any utility space that constituents cannot get by  
6 without subscribing; and in Green Bay we don't  
7 have a choice. It's WPS or nothing.

8 Now, the flyers we received over  
9 the summer said to expect a \$6 increase this  
10 winter; and so I'm curious today, how did we get  
11 to 15, and why has the brunt of this change in  
12 rates been put on residential and small business  
13 consumers?

14 The Green Bay Press Gazette  
15 reported that there's a 14.7 percent increase in  
16 residential customer rates. While rates for  
17 small commercial and industrial consumers will go  
18 up 14.1 percent, or \$34.88 a month, large  
19 industrial and commercial customers would have a  
20 7.3 percent increase.

21 So that's pretty as plain as it  
22 gets to me and to my constituents. The largest  
23 corporations in our area will see a softened blow  
24 while our working-class families will have to  
25 decide between eating, keeping a roof over their

1 head and the lights on. That's the choice that  
2 we have today.

3 So I'm asking you for the sake of  
4 my constituents, for the sake of Wisconsinites  
5 and residents in Green Bay, small businesses in  
6 our community, I encourage you to make the right  
7 choice.

8 Please do not pass off these  
9 increased rates to our residents. Thank you.

10 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thank you,  
11 Representative.

12 Okay. Next witness is Douglas  
13 Cayer, C-a-y-e-r. You know the drill by now.

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1 DOUGLAS CAYER, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MR. CAYER: I was noticing that  
4 after -- the City Council is asking for a  
5 \$300 million debt already; and with the price of  
6 gas and food all of a sudden going up, my  
7 suggestion would be to wait till 2024 when, if  
8 circumstances happen that I think are going to  
9 better this whole country, would be in a better  
10 position to have this increase.

11 Now, I've been self-employed for  
12 the last 50 years, and I don't have the luxury of  
13 saying I want a 15 or 20 percent increase, and  
14 it's already done. Sometimes I have to just eat  
15 my profit in order to make it -- to sustain, but  
16 I think 15 percent is quite high.

17 If any increase would be  
18 justified, maybe 5 percent to start; and we've  
19 got -- we've got two more years till all of a  
20 sudden our president is raising everybody's  
21 taxes, whether you think they're taxes or not,  
22 the gasoline and the food -- gasoline is hitting  
23 me really hard; and a lot of friends of mine that  
24 are truckers with diesel, what happens at the end  
25 of the month when diesel just isn't there anymore

1 because of the cost.

2           It's really upsetting to see  
3 somebody asking for an exorbitant rate change. I  
4 have no issues against WPS. I've owned  
5 properties, and I've dealt with them quite a lot,  
6 and they've always been real nice and helpful.

7           But this just seems a little bit  
8 outrageous for -- cuz now the mayor wants to  
9 spend \$300 million all of a sudden, and they're  
10 probably going to get it; and the schools want a  
11 hundred million dollars, and they'll probably get  
12 it too because everybody's saying, Oh, well, the  
13 price is going up. We might as well just eat it.

14           But what about these people that  
15 can't afford it? I can afford to eat and run my  
16 vehicle and have my business go on, but some of  
17 these people are -- they're going to be stuck  
18 for -- turn the heat off in the winter in this  
19 city? You can't do it.

20           And even if that section on the  
21 Pub Service bill says, low income help, that  
22 little thing, it's 3 or 5 bucks each month of  
23 billing, that's going to have to go sky high  
24 because some people are gonna just have that --  
25 have that option of eat or use your heat. It's

1 not pretty.

2 And it isn't like Public Service  
3 is hurting. You've got sustainability and you  
4 know that everybody's backing you, but it's just  
5 watching everything happen with the prices going  
6 sky high all of a sudden, and nobody's prepared  
7 for this because I thought everything was going  
8 to be pretty well sailing, and businesses were  
9 getting profits up. And then maybe in -- I'm  
10 thinking in 2024 things are going to turn around,  
11 they have to, or there's going to be a civil war  
12 in this country because nobody can sustain like  
13 this. It's just too much of a shock.

14 So that's my piece.

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Well,  
16 thanks for your comment.

17 So that's all the comments I  
18 have -- all the appearance slips I have for  
19 people who want to make a comment.

20 I think I see -- were you wanting  
21 to speak today?

22 MR. WELSING: I was going to, but --

23 EXAMINER NEWMARK: It's fine.

24 MR. WELSING: I didn't hear what was  
25 spoken about before prior to this.

1 EXAMINER NEWMARK: That doesn't matter.  
2 That's fine. We're just looking for your opinion  
3 on the case.

4 If you want to speak, we'll just  
5 need you to come up here. So it's up to you.

6 MR. WELSING: Okay.

7 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Why not.  
8 So first of all, I'll just swear  
9 you in and get your name.

10 MR. WELSING: Wally.

11 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So have a seat. So  
12 raise your right hand and give us your name,  
13 please.

14 MR. WELSING: Walter Welsing.

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: And just spell that  
16 for her.

17 MR. WELSING: W-e-l-s-i-n-g.

18 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Perfect. All  
19 right. Go ahead.

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1 WALTER WELSING, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MR. WELSING: You know, I understand  
4 where the raises have to come in and housing and  
5 the new -- everything's going, like everybody  
6 else said. You know, and it's gotta be -- I  
7 guess everybody, myself and everybody that's  
8 paying Public Service, Public Service is a  
9 business, and we really don't know what you guys  
10 do. We just pay.

11 And because we don't -- a lot of  
12 people don't have time to do anything to really  
13 do research. So I guess myself, as speaking for  
14 other people too, we just want you to be honest  
15 and trustworthy to work for us and do the right  
16 thing.

17 And not to be -- you know, nothing  
18 against having corporate bonuses, but sometimes  
19 if they have a bonus and they raise the rates  
20 because they have a bonus, that might not be --  
21 sit very well with other people also. But, yeah,  
22 the main thing is, is that as people in the Brown  
23 County Public Service area, we just want you to  
24 do the work and be honest with everybody. You  
25 know, that's the main thing I'd like to say.

1           You know, for the city of  
2 Green Bay also with the assessments that just  
3 went on, you know, housing market went crazy.  
4 Houses aren't worth what they paid for, and  
5 people are really upset about that.

6           Like I said, I don't really know  
7 what other people spoke about prior, but  
8 hopefully you'll see in your heart and in common  
9 sense how you would, you know, see other people  
10 with their expenses and things like that.

11           Yeah. That's about all, something  
12 quick and easy.

13           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Sounds good. All  
14 right.

15           So anyone else wish to speak? So  
16 it's about 2:25. I think if we just go into  
17 recess for about 15 minutes, people who have  
18 spoken already can leave, it's up to you, but  
19 we'll just sit and wait in case someone else  
20 shows up.

21           So we'll do about a 15-minute  
22 break and then come back and see if anyone else  
23 wants to make a comment. So we'll be in recess  
24 till then.

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1 (Recess taken from 2:19 p.m.

2 until 2:32 p.m.)

3 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Well,  
4 let's get back on the record.

5 Just checking if we have anyone  
6 else in attendance that wishes to make a comment.

7 Anybody? No? All right. Well, we'll stand  
8 adjourned until 6:00 p.m.

9 Thanks, everyone, for attending.

10 (Proceedings adjourned until 6:00 p.m.)

11 \* \* \* \* \*

12 6:00 p.m.

13 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Raise  
14 your right hand.

15 All right. Give us your name and  
16 your statement.

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1       ANDY O, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2       DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3       MR. ANDY O: Name's Andy O, and I want

4 to read you guys something that's very, very

5 important. Okay?

6           Everything that is expected from

7 an ordinary weapon is expected from a silent

8 weapon by its creators, but only as a matter of

9 functioning. It shoots situations instead of

10 bullets propelled by data processing instead of

11 chemical reaction and explosion, originating from

12 bits of data instead of grains of gun powder,

13 from a computer instead of a gun operated by a

14 computer programmer instead of a marksman under

15 the orders of a banking magnet instead of a

16 military general.

17           It makes no obvious explosive

18 noises, causes no obvious physical or mental

19 injuries and does not obviously interfere with

20 anyone's daily social life. Yet, it makes an

21 unmistakable noise, causes unmistakable physical

22 and mental damage and unmistakably interferes

23 with the daily social life, i.e., unmistakable to

24 the trained observer, one who knows what to look

25 for.

1           The public cannot comprehend this  
2   weapon and, therefore, cannot believe that they  
3   are being attacked and subdued by a weapon. The  
4   public might instinctively feel that something is  
5   wrong, but that is because of the technical  
6   nature of the silent weapon they cannot express  
7   through feelings in a rational way or handle  
8   their problem with intelligence. Therefore, they  
9   do not know how to cry for help, and they do not  
10   know how to associate with others to defend  
11   themselves against it.

12           When a silent weapon is applied  
13   gradually, the public adjusts or adapts to its  
14   presence and learns to tolerate encroachment on  
15   their lives until the pressure psychologically  
16   via economics becomes too great they crack up.

17           Therefore, the silent weapon is a  
18   type of biological warfare. It attacks the  
19   vitality, the options, the mobility of the  
20   individual of a society by knowing,  
21   understanding, manipulating, and attacking their  
22   sources of natural and social energy and their  
23   physical, mental and emotional strengths and  
24   weaknesses.

25           Economic shock testing. Economic

1 engineers achieve the same result in studying the  
2 behavior of an economy and consumer public by  
3 carefully selecting a staple commodity such as  
4 beef, coffee, gasoline or sugar and then causing  
5 a sudden change or shock in its price or  
6 availability, thus kicking everybody's budget and  
7 buying habits out of shape.

8           They then observe the shock wave  
9 which results by monitoring the changes in  
10 advertising prices and sales of that and other  
11 commodities.

12           And you guys want to raise the  
13 rates. What are you going to do when there's no  
14 more diesel fuel? How do you guys generate  
15 electricity? How much do you want to raise the  
16 rates? Anybody in here know the answers to this?

17           MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: 14 percent.

18           MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: 14 percent.

19           THE WITNESS: Uhm-hm. Yeah, that's  
20 unbelievable.

21           Kind of coincidence with our  
22 leader, dictator-in-chief, saying that he's gonna  
23 attack the fees of companies, place taxes on big  
24 oil companies. Did he even mention he's gonna  
25 put a tax on Saudi Arabia? Any of those? No.

1 Our own.

2 Do you guys accept any grants from  
3 the government with the Green New Deal? Does  
4 anybody have the answers to that? Did you accept  
5 any money to put any more electrical in? Do you  
6 buy any electricity from Kaukauna? Because I  
7 know they sell it.

8 Anybody want a copy of this so you  
9 know exactly what's going on in this nation?  
10 Because I took an oath to protect you people.  
11 That oath didn't have an expiration date.

12 I've had two death threats  
13 already, but they saw me coming. They knew that  
14 they couldn't get away with it. And here you  
15 guys are doing it economically by messing with  
16 everybody's pocketbook.

17 None of this is a coincidence that  
18 it's happening at this time. Diesel fuel is  
19 short. Railroads are in a quandary right now  
20 not knowing what they're gonna do. What happens  
21 when that shuts down? Where are we going to get  
22 our oil? I worked in the North Dakota oil  
23 field for four years. I saw what was going on.  
24 Where are we going to get it from? The wind?  
25 Solar?

1           Big push for electric cars. Our  
2 governor's using money on trolley and then  
3 charging stations. They're already doing it.  
4 They lied their way into it.

5           Now's the time to stand up and do  
6 what you gotta do. I'll take 'em on if I have  
7 to. Pretty sure after this I'll get another  
8 death threat.

9           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thanks for your  
10 comment.

11           Okay. We have Karry O'Saben.  
12 Have a seat. Raise your right hand.

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1 KARRY O'SABEN, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. O'SABEN: As I know it.

4 Well, I'm not -- I don't have a  
5 lot of fancy words. I'm a senior citizen, and  
6 last spring, my budget bill went up quite a bit,  
7 about \$50.

8 So we called -- my mother and I  
9 live together, and I called the electric company;  
10 and they said to me, well, we used the computer  
11 logarithm and decided to raise your rate.

12 So I said to them, Well, it's  
13 quite a bit more. Is there any way that I can  
14 appeal this? Is there any committee that I can  
15 talk to about this? No. The logarithm is the  
16 final decider. The computer decides and whatever  
17 it is, that's what you have to live with.

18 Now, that's the first rate  
19 increase that we received this year, and now  
20 you're asking for a second rate increase. And I  
21 did say to them, you know, I have new windows, I  
22 have insulation, we have a new air conditioner.  
23 It doesn't matter because we've decided to raise  
24 the rates.

25 So your situation, it's not your

1 fault. That was very nice to hear them say, but  
2 the reality is there's nothing you can do about  
3 it. It's the computer, it's the decision-making  
4 process; and you are just one of -- you know,  
5 you're getting the rate that everybody else who  
6 uses what you use gets.

7           So this to me seems unfair because  
8 we know there's going to be a recession next  
9 year, and everyone seems to want more money. And  
10 you're just one -- I don't think your -- I don't  
11 think it's personal. I just think you're just  
12 another person wanting money during a tough time  
13 for people; and perhaps we should think about the  
14 individuals, the fact that the individuals have  
15 to pay more than the corporations because there's  
16 two different rates.

17           And maybe we should also think  
18 about the fact that people have already had a  
19 rate increase, and maybe we should wait until  
20 after we know what's going to happen with the  
21 recession before we consider another rate  
22 increase.

23           Thank you for listening to me.  
24 That's all.

25           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thank you, ma'am.

1 Okay.

2 Patricia Ball. Raise your right

3 hand.

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1 PATRICIA BALL, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. BALL: I also -- as she said, I  
4 also live in a home where there are two seniors.  
5 We're both on fixed income. We don't have huge  
6 pensions. We have no pension. So you know,  
7 we -- Social Security, that's it.

8 And, you know, people say, Well,  
9 you know, you're going to get an increase. Well,  
10 you get an increase in Social Security, but also  
11 the amount that they take out for Medicare, which  
12 you are forced to have, also increases. So you  
13 really don't get, you know, much of an increase  
14 with Social Security.

15 As this other woman said, we've  
16 already gotten an increase. I moved into the  
17 home in 2018; and at that point, there was a  
18 program where if you didn't use a lot of  
19 electricity during the peak hours you got a  
20 discount. Well, I got a letter last year saying,  
21 we're discontinuing that. You're not going to  
22 get that anymore.

23 So that was an increase because  
24 we're no longer getting the discount; and also,  
25 you know, we've gotten another increase. And now

1 14 percent, that's incredible. You know, who can  
2 afford 14 percent, you know? I don't care if  
3 you're on Social Security or if you're making  
4 minimum wage or whatever. Who can afford an  
5 increase of 14 percent on top of what we're  
6 already -- you know, the increase we've already  
7 gotten?

8           And also, the service has not  
9 gotten any better. In the last three months,  
10 we've lost electricity three times. It's just  
11 really strange. Once each month we lose  
12 electricity, and it's out for hours. One time it  
13 was out for 18 hours.

14           And when you call and say, you  
15 know, you want to know why, the answer was --  
16 it's an automated phone and they say, you know,  
17 the reason is unknown, but yet we're going for  
18 hours without electricity.

19           So it's just interesting that it's  
20 Wisconsin Public Service, but the service really  
21 isn't that great. And, you know, it's really  
22 hard with everything -- all the prices of  
23 everything going up, and we -- you know, how can  
24 we afford to pay another 14 percent? And we  
25 don't use a lot.

1           You know, it's like we keep our  
2 thermostat during the winter, we keep it low.  
3 For me it's low. It's 71 degrees. For me,  
4 that's low. And during the summer, we set it  
5 at, like, 72 degrees, so we're not at 65 or  
6 60 degrees. And we have a lot of trees on our  
7 property, so we're not using an excess amount  
8 of electricity, but yet our bills every month  
9 are 200, \$225, and now it's going to go up  
10 14 percent.

11           We can't afford it, and we're  
12 already on such a strict budget. We don't go out  
13 to a lot of restaurants. We don't go out to a  
14 lot of movies. We don't go out to a lot of  
15 entertaining places. We pretty well, you know,  
16 stay home a lot. I have a garden, so I'm able to  
17 grow food, but yet, you know, the prices of food  
18 is incredible how much it has gone up.

19           You know, I'm not even going to go  
20 through the whole list of how much it's gone up.  
21 But again, we don't have a lot of luxurious or  
22 extravagant food. It's the basics.

23           So we just can't afford  
24 14 percent, and we don't understand how it can be  
25 raised 14 percent so quickly; and it's just

1 something that, you know, again, as seniors we  
2 really can't afford.

3 EXAMINER NEWMARK: I just had a quick  
4 question for you. You said that you're using  
5 time-of-use rates where it's lower during  
6 off-peak hours, and the rate goes up during peak  
7 hours, and you said that was discontinued?

8 MS. BALL: Yes.

9 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So I would encourage  
10 you to talk to the utility about that because I  
11 think that program does still exist, and maybe  
12 there's just come confusion.

13 MS. BALL: Last year we got a -- you  
14 know, last year we got a letter saying, you know,  
15 this has been discontinued; and, you know, you're  
16 not any longer going to get that discount.

17 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Well, I'd  
18 encourage you to talk to the utilities. So in  
19 the other room there's some representatives, and  
20 maybe they can clear that up face to face.

21 MS. BALL: Okay. All right.

22 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Great.  
23 Thanks for your comment.

24 MS. BALL: Thank you.

25 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Debbie

1 Poradek.

2 MS. PORADEK: Poradek.

3 EXAMINER NEWMARK: You're the only one  
4 to complain so far. I'm usually pretty bad about  
5 pronouncing names unfortunately.

6 Have a seat, please. Raise your  
7 right hand.

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1 DEBBIE PORADEK, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. PORADEK: I'm Debbie Poradek. I'm  
4 a resident of Ashwaubenon. For the record, they  
5 did discontinue that time-of-use. They came and  
6 put the equipment in, and I had to pay someone to  
7 remove it afterwards. That was like two summers  
8 ago.

9 I'm a little bit -- I thought this  
10 was going to be more informational, this hearing,  
11 but I do have questions. And the only reason I  
12 know about this is because I happened to see a  
13 news blip. I'm one of these people that does  
14 e-bills, and so I don't really ever get a paper  
15 copy anymore. So I was not notified of this  
16 increase or your YouTube, any other -- anyway,  
17 not letting the people know. So I'm canceling  
18 e-bill. You know, you guys can send me a paper  
19 bill each month, and I'll get the notifications  
20 again.

21 But I have questions. Number  
22 one, so this is a new increase on top of the  
23 15 percent? Because you know what? I want to  
24 know -- last winter our bills went up quite a  
25 bit. I think they went up at least another

1 5 percent last winter because I know -- I think  
2 it was -- this year, I've not had a bill under a  
3 hundred dollars. Previous summers and that, I  
4 would've had one maybe 98, reasonable.

5           So I mean, so this is like  
6 probably going to be the third increase in a row.  
7 What are you doing to -- I want to know and I  
8 want to ask somebody, what are you doing to cut  
9 costs? People at We Energies, are they  
10 getting -- I didn't get a very big raise when I  
11 was still working. I just retired in July, and I  
12 had my budget figured out that with the bills  
13 they are, you know, a little bit here and  
14 there, I should be fine without pulling Social  
15 Security.

16           What is We Energies doing to cut  
17 costs? All of us -- all of the middle income  
18 people or anybody out there like me and the  
19 people in this room are cutting back. I'm  
20 looking at doing 64 degrees in my house this  
21 winter, which I shouldn't have to.

22           I know people at We Energies, they  
23 make a nice salary, they get nice benefits. I'm  
24 sure they got nice big increases this year. And  
25 why the 14 percent? I mean, do you still -- I

1 mean, like they mentioned, I haven't seen any  
2 improvements in any of our lines.

3           This summer we had -- the first  
4 outage I had was -- in Ashwaubenon, they're all  
5 underground lines. The reason we had that  
6 outage in the summer is because there's a  
7 transformer that malfunctioned over on Velp  
8 Avenue, and it took out the whole west side of  
9 Green Bay.

10           Okay. So you're doing this  
11 increase. What are we gonna get out of it  
12 besides getting to keep our lights on? I mean,  
13 what are you doing to cut -- what are you doing  
14 to cut costs before you raise our rates? I'm  
15 asking that of the school board. I'm asking that  
16 of everybody that's trying to pull this because  
17 we can't take any more.

18           I mean, they want to increase my  
19 property tax bill because of the schools; they  
20 want more money. You want more money monthly,  
21 which I don't have. Grocery stores are wanting  
22 more money. And then why aren't you hitting the  
23 big businesses? They've already knocked it to us  
24 once. Why are you just knocking it to the  
25 residentials and the small business?

1           What's going to happen when you  
2   apply these increases to rental apartments? Are  
3   they gonna up the rates for all the renters and  
4   throw housing out of whack again? I mean, I  
5   guess I'm disappointed because I'm not getting  
6   any information in here; and if there was other  
7   publications that told me what was going on, I  
8   missed them because I didn't get your paper  
9   notifications each month.

10           So if there is, where can I get my  
11   answers? And if I have additional complaints,  
12   who can I go to? Like the gentleman that left, I  
13   agree with him. The concept I agree with.

14           But I would like to know who can I  
15   go to that maybe -- except for some nonprofit  
16   group that's trying to stand up for us in the  
17   CUB, who else can we go to? Do I have to go to  
18   Governor Evers or do I have to go to someone at  
19   the state level to please do something?

20           EXAMINER NEWMARK: The Commission  
21   Staff's available to hear complaints and  
22   questions, and the utility is also available.

23           MS. BALL: Where can I get that address  
24   and information?

25           EXAMINER NEWMARK: The other room right

1 there (indicating).

2 MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: Are they here  
3 tonight if we have a comment?

4 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Yes. Off the  
5 record.

6 (Discussion off the record.)

7 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So let's just get  
8 back on the record.

9 Did you want to add anything else?

10 MS. BALL: No. That was it.

11 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Great.  
12 Thanks.

13 So I don't have any more  
14 appearance slips. Does anyone else wish to  
15 speak? The appearance slip, pick that up from  
16 the back. If you wanted to speak, fill that out.  
17 Anybody else? No?

18 All right. Well, let's recess for  
19 about ten minutes, see if anyone changes their  
20 mind. Just give me an appearance slip, and we  
21 can take your comments. Be back around 6:30,  
22 6:35, and we'll try again and see if anyone else  
23 wants to comment.

24 (Recess taken from 6:23 p.m.  
25 until 6:36 p.m.)

1           EXAMINER NEWMARK: So at this time  
2 let's call Kelly McHugh. You waited patiently.  
3 Thank you. Raise your right hand. I'll swear  
4 you in.

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1 KELLY McHUGH, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. McHUGH: Well, my main comment is  
4 14 percent is a very large increase. Like most  
5 of the people in here, they said they were on  
6 fixed income, Social Security. I'm single. I'm  
7 working three jobs.

8 Rate increases hurt everybody all  
9 around. It'd be nice if the state helped out and  
10 stopped these rate increases. Every year we  
11 seem to be getting them, 3 percent, 5 percent,  
12 now 14. Where is the money going to? WPS is a  
13 very big, big profitable company. And in return,  
14 we're getting hit for it. I don't think it's  
15 fair.

16 I really wish the state -- I mean,  
17 there's been times where judges have put  
18 injunctions on it, and WPS is like, We're still  
19 gonna raise the rates. Hopefully, this meeting  
20 will do some good.

21 You know, we've come here as a  
22 group saying we're not for it. We have concerns  
23 too. Probably the worst year ever. It sounds  
24 like WPS is just getting on the bandwagon to do a  
25 rate increase because everything else is

1 inflating. So WPS is like, Oh, what the heck?  
2 But we're all being stretched to  
3 our limits, our dollars, our housing, everything.  
4 I just hope that this meeting brings some good.  
5 I hope that the state will step in and state,  
6 enough is enough, you know, because where is it  
7 gonna stop, like some of the people said,  
8 14 percent this year, another 5 percent, another  
9 2 percent. You know, we're all trying to make it  
10 work.

11 So thank you for your time.

12 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Thanks  
13 for your comment.

14 Linda Mendez.

15 MS. MENDEZ: Lillian.

16 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Lillian, sorry. I  
17 could've read that better, you're right.

18 MS. MENDEZ: Three l's.

19 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Yes. My mother's  
20 name so should've known. Raise your right hand.

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1 LILLIAN MENDEZ, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. MENDEZ: Pretty much I echo what  
4 everyone else has said. The timing of this is  
5 very suspect. It's incredible that we just  
6 came out of a lockdown with COVID where  
7 everybody has been really traumatized by it and  
8 been hit left and right and was just coming back  
9 out of that, and we're trying to make sense of  
10 what's going on and continue to be put in a  
11 position where another wave of, you know, a  
12 level of afflictions, in essence, being  
13 applied to everyone here and everyone in this  
14 state.

15 The economy is not great as  
16 everybody knows. The inflation rate is  
17 incredible. We've not seen this inflation rate  
18 this high since the time of Carter, President  
19 Carter, which our current president seems to be  
20 echoing.

21 And the fact that, you know, as  
22 stated before, we were hit with increases  
23 throughout the last several years, and usually  
24 they're smaller increments. They were like,  
25 what, 2 percent, maybe 3 percent, maybe

1 4 percent; and all of a sudden, to get a  
2 14.7 percent hike all at once makes no sense  
3 logically; and economically for a lot of us, this  
4 thing is going to really impoverish us.

5           And the fact that, you know, the  
6 companies are only getting a 7 percent  
7 requirement for an increase and we, as residents,  
8 you know, as the average Joe, are being asked to  
9 put 14.7, that is clearly not fair, and that just  
10 seems to be really not justified.

11           And, you know, we understand that  
12 the current administration, President Biden is  
13 really anti-diesel and fossil fuels and oil; and  
14 they're really pushing everybody and mandating  
15 the companies to, in essence, change their means  
16 and ways of conducting business and putting and  
17 applying all sorts of pressures onto the utility  
18 companies who switch from fossil fuels to solar  
19 to wind. Those things take time.

20           But our current administration  
21 doesn't seem to care about the fact that things  
22 should be done incrementally. So to just simply  
23 put and to shut the switch off on us just to  
24 accommodate the current administration policy and  
25 just add more weight on people's backs and

1 breaking them economically -- you know, once you  
2 break our backs, who are you going to go for  
3 afterwards? You know, once there is no more to  
4 give, where are you gonna get the money from?

5           So we need to work and live  
6 together harmoniously. This can't be a  
7 completely, you know, squeeze everything out of  
8 the average Joe to see what you can get. I mean,  
9 sooner or later, there's nothing more to squeeze  
10 out of us.

11           So we need to have common sense,  
12 and we need to look at things in terms of  
13 progress, in terms of implementing plans. You  
14 need to look at it more intelligently, logically,  
15 if not common sense, you know.

16           You can't just switch something  
17 off and think that you're going to have all the  
18 other sources provide everything you need. It's  
19 not working. We've already seen that. We've  
20 seen that in California. We've seen that in New  
21 York City. I'm originally from New York City,  
22 and the horrors that I hear about what's going on  
23 there breaks my heart. But I know what happens  
24 in the extreme east and west ends up happening  
25 here in the Midwest.

1           So we need to do something better  
2 than this. This is not fair. This is not right.  
3 I believe in a God that overall sees all this,  
4 knows all of this, and one day will cast himself  
5 and provide justice for us, and that's the hope.

6           So, again, the senior citizens are  
7 squeezed. The single moms are squeezed. All of  
8 us are being squeezed. I don't even know what my  
9 property taxes are gonna be like, you know. The  
10 price of our home, all of the sudden the value  
11 has increased and doubled, but wait a minute.

12           You know, I didn't pay that much  
13 when I -- I mean, on the one side that's nice, on  
14 the other side it's not. Because I'm gonna have  
15 a property tax bill that I have no clue whether  
16 or not I'm going to be able to make it. So  
17 sooner or later, you're going to see homes  
18 being lost in foreclosures because we can't keep  
19 up.

20           So please use, at the very least,  
21 common sense. You know, by profession I'm in  
22 that industry of design and architectural, and  
23 I know what this is all about. You know, it's  
24 not fair that in order to create change, you try  
25 to force it on everyone all at once. It takes

1 time.

2           You build a building, you don't  
3 build it just in one day like this. It takes  
4 time to draw and draft those drawings. Have  
5 the engineers, all the professionals, all the  
6 code advisors, everybody at the table, looking at  
7 the project and approving it and then building;  
8 and even in the building process, it takes about  
9 a year to two possibly depending upon the  
10 project.

11           So you can't do this thing to us  
12 overnight. So I'm asking you to wisely consider  
13 what we are asking. Thank you.

14           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Great. Thank you  
15 very much.

16           Come on up and give us your name  
17 when you get here. All right. Let me swear you  
18 in. Give us your name and your comment.

19           MR. WIMBERGER: I'm Eric Wimberger.

20           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Just spell your last  
21 name.

22           MR. WIMBERGER: W-i-m-b-e-r-g-e-r.

23           EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Perfect.  
24 Thanks.

25

1 ERIC WIMBERGER, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MR. WIMBERGER: I'm an attorney. They  
4 say that if you write poorly, it's a sign of  
5 intelligence. So I actually write poorly so I  
6 can get smarter. So there's a connection.

7 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Sounds like an  
8 attorney.

9 MR. WIMBERGER: I'm a state senator for  
10 the 30th District in Green Bay here. You're  
11 sitting in my district right now. So I kind of  
12 feel obligated to at least say something to y'all  
13 or at least testify about my opinion.

14 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Go ahead.

15 MR. WIMBERGER: There's just a lot of  
16 attention on it. Numbers better shake out  
17 meaningfully. Costs better -- costs better match  
18 what the demand is.

19 Utilities are given a monopoly on  
20 purpose because in the olden days, there used to  
21 be wires everywhere and pipes everywhere. It's  
22 like a nest; and then, you know, once you try to  
23 fix something, you damage the other guys' wires.

24 So in exchange for order, the  
25 monopoly was sort of given to utilities. That's

1 the nature of it. But then there's the thing  
2 imposed on the monopoly, which is, you know, you  
3 gotta do things for the public good in a sense.  
4 So if there's gamesmanship or whatnot, then it  
5 brings attention. And I hope it works out. I'll  
6 be looking at it.

7 Situations like this bring  
8 spotlights on things such as community solar,  
9 other projects that can be alternatives to kind  
10 of ease the strain on the public and their costs.

11 So it's -- I guess my comment is  
12 that, for now, trust that the costs are the  
13 reason, and we'll be looking at it.

14 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Thanks  
15 very much.

16 That's all the appearance slips I  
17 have. Does anybody else wish to make a comment?  
18 No? All right.

19 Yes? Would you like to comment?

20 MS. PORADEK: I forgot one comment --

21 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Would you like to  
22 add to your comment?

23 MS. PORADEK: -- and I could be wrong.

24

25

1 DEBBIE PORADEK, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN  
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT (continued) BY

3 MS. PORADEK: My name's Debbie Poradek  
4 again.

5 In the information that was sent  
6 out this week, you were -- the statement was  
7 made, I thought, that even with this increase --  
8 that with this increase, We Energies -- in this  
9 area we're paying less for utilities than what  
10 other areas pay; and then in Wisconsin we pay  
11 less for utilities than what some other states  
12 pay.

13 Well, for the record, we make less  
14 money in Wisconsin. That's just the bottom line.  
15 The wage -- I mean, you can compare us to other  
16 states, but I think if you'd go back and compare  
17 apples to apples and not apples to oranges, you  
18 would see that we aren't getting the lowest  
19 rates.

20 That's my opinion. Thank you.

21 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Great.

22 So with that, we're adjourned.

23 Thanks very much, everyone, for participating,  
24 coming out today, for speaking and listening. I  
25 really appreciate it.



1                   We will adjourn now and submit  
2   this transcript to the Commission for -- they'll  
3   use it as part of its decision-making process.  
4   Thank you all. Have a good night.

5                   (The hearing concluded at 6:49 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF WISCONSIN )

2 MILWAUKEE COUNTY )

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4 I, DEBBIE A. HARNEN, Registered

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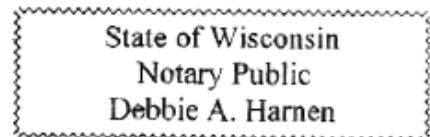
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11 shorthand notes taken at said time and place.

12 Debbie A. Harnen

13 Debbie A. Harnen

14 Registered Professional Reporter



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Dated this 3rd day of November, 2022.

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